

**Communicable Disease Epidemiology
and Immunization Section**

401 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98104-1818

206-296-4774 Fax 206-296-4803

TTY Relay: 711

www.kingcounty.gov/health

**Health Advisory:
Increased Norovirus-like Illness Activity in King County
March 11, 2010**

Action requested:

- **Be aware of increased reports of norovirus like illness in King County**
- **Educate patients on norovirus prevention measures**
 - **Wash hands after using the toilet, before eating, and before handling food, beverages, and ice**
 - **Do not prepare food for others if you have diarrhea and/or vomiting**
 - **Discard foods that were handled or prepared by someone with diarrhea and/or vomiting**
 - **Promptly clean and disinfect any surfaces that become soiled with vomit or stool with a dilute bleach solution (1 part household bleach to 50 parts water) or an EPA approved disinfectant**
 - **Stay home from work, school, or child care if ill**
- **Report institutional outbreaks of norovirus-like illness to Public Health at (206) 296-4774**

Background

Recently Public Health has received increased reports of norovirus-like illness outbreaks from long term care facilities, assisted living facilities, and restaurant customers. Emergency Departments in King County have also seen an increase in the proportion of visits due to vomiting among children under two years old. Symptoms of a norovirus infection can include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, headache, body aches, and sometimes fever. People typically become ill 24 to 48 hours after exposure to the virus, and symptoms usually last one to two days. Serious complications are rare, though intravenous hydration is sometimes necessary particularly for the elderly. Noroviruses are present in the stool and vomit of infected people and are spread primarily through person-to-person contact, or contamination of food prepared by an ill or recently ill person who did not practice adequate handwashing. Infected persons can continue to be infectious for a few days after their symptoms have resolved. Educate patients about norovirus prevention and control, particularly if they are food workers or healthcare workers.

Resources

Public Health – Seattle & King County Norovirus Factsheet

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/norovirus.aspx> or go to <http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/cd> and click “N” for norovirus - Chinese, English, Spanish, and Vietnamese versions are available

CDC Factsheet on Norovirus in Healthcare Facilities

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/id_norovirusFS.html

EPA-approved disinfectants for use against norovirus

http://epa.gov/oppad001/list_g_norovirus.pdf